

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS
REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1990

JULY 20 (legislative day, JULY 10), 1990.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. KENNEDY, from the Committee on Labor and Human
Resources, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 2632]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Labor and Human Resources, to which was referred the bill (S. 2632), to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the National Center for Health Statistics, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon and recommends that the bill do pass.

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I. SUMMARY OF THE BILL

This bill amends Title III of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), administered by the Centers for Disease Control, for \$58 million in fiscal year 1991 and such sums as may be necessary through 1995. This bill also requires that NCHS continue to collect statistically valid

data, based on survey interviews from a representative sample, regarding the general health status of the American population.

II. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE LEGISLATION

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the primary source of Federal government health statistics. NCHS collects and reports on a wide range of data, including overall health status, the tracking of illness and disability, and the use of health care services. This information is essential to health care policy-makers and researchers. The existing authority for the center expires on September 30, 1990.

NCHS was established in 1960 by assuming the responsibilities of the National Office of Vital Statistics and the National Health Survey. The NCHS has since developed a wider range of data collection responsibilities, and in 1988 administration of NCHS was moved from a separate agency within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health to the Centers for Disease Control.

Currently, NCHS maintains four major data systems as well as a number of other targeted surveys. The National Vital Statistics System coordinates the national uniform collection of the state-collected vital statistics on births, deaths, marriages, and divorces. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey collects data through direct physical examinations and diagnostic tests to provide clinical, physical, and physiological data on the U.S. population. The National Health Interview Survey, which has been collected since 1957, consists of questions on health status and demographic characteristics. Finally, the National Health Care Survey is conducted to examine the use of health care providers and health care settings. In addition to these principal data systems, NCHS conducts a number of other targeted surveys, including data regarding HIV and AIDS, maternal and infant health, and aging. NCHS also coordinates with other Federal agencies to provide assistance in health care data collection to serve the needs of the Federal Government.

III. TEXT OF THE BILL AS REPORTED

[S. 2632; 101st Cong., 2d Sess.]

A BILL To amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the National Center for Health Statistics, and for other purposes

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Center for Health Statistics Reauthorization Act of 1990".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS.

Section 306 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 242k) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), by striking out "Committee on Human Resources" and inserting in lieu thereof "Committee on Labor and Human Resources";

(2) in subsection (h)—

(A) by inserting "(1)" after the subsection designation; and

(B) by adding at the end thereof the following new paragraph:

"(2) There shall be an annual collection of data from a statistically valid sample concerning the general health, illness, and disability status of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Specific topics to be addressed under this paragraph on an annual or rotating basis, shall include the incidence of illness and accidental injuries, prevalence of chronic diseases and impairments, disability, physician visits, hospitalizations, and the relationship between demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and health characteristics."; and

(3) in subsection (m), by striking out "\$55,000,000 for fiscal years 1988" and all that follows through the period and inserting in lieu thereof "\$58,000,000 for fiscal year 1991, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1992 through 1995."

IV. COMMITTEE VIEWS

The Committee supports the continuation of the Center's role as the nation's principal health statistics agency, mandated to monitor the nation's health and the use of health services and to explore the relationships between risk factors and disease. A clear understanding of health problems and their impact on the population and economy serve as the foundation of the nation's public health, health research, and health policy efforts. For continuation of the National Center for Health Statistics' work, the Committee authorizes \$58,000,000 for fiscal year 1991 and such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 1992 through 1995.

New demands are increasingly being placed on the nation's health statistics system. Changes in the population, new emphasis on setting and achieving national health objectives, and changes in the financing and delivery of health care require close monitoring and analysis. To respond to these needs for data to guide health policy, and evaluate results, all four categories of data systems—National Vital Statistics Surveys, Personal Interview Surveys, Health Examination Surveys, and Surveys of Health Care Providers—should be funded each year.

The Committee supports the uninterrupted collection of data from the National Health Interview Survey, a valuable source of data on the health status of the population which has been collected annually since 1957. The data collected includes information regarding the incidence of illness and accidental injuries, prevalence of chronic diseases and impairments, disability, physician visits, immunization status, hospitalizations, and other health topics as well as demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. In addition, annual surveys have included questions regarding current health topics, including health insurance, occupational safety and health, cancer, and aging. This survey, in addition to the other major surveys and data systems maintained by NCHS, is vital to maintain-

ing an up-to-date understanding of the health status and needs of the American population.

The Committee understands that the surveys do not use the latest technology, such as lap-top computers, for interviews. To provide fast analysis and interpretation to data and dissemination, the Committee urges the Secretary to provide funds to incorporate automation and technology into the NCHS surveys. The faster the health community can receive health statistics, the better health policy can be evaluated to provide quality services and improve the health status of the nation.

V. LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The National Center for Health Statistics was authorized through fiscal year 1990 in Public Law 100-177, the Public Health Service Amendments of 1987. S. 2632, the National Center for Health Statistics Reauthorization Act of 1990, was introduced May 15, 1990 by Senator Kennedy with Senators Hatch, Adams, and Dodd as cosponsors. The Labor and Health Resources Committee met to consider S. 2632 on May 16, 1990. The Committee agreed unanimously by voice vote to report S. 2632 to the Senate.

VI. COST ESTIMATE

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, June 5, 1990.

HON. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Chairman, Committee on Labor and Human Resources,
U.S. Senator, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the attached cost estimate for S. 2632, the National Center for Health Statistics Reauthorization Act of 1990, as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources on May 16, 1990.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them.

Sincerely,

ROBERT D. REISCHAUER,
Director.

Attachment.

1. Bill number: S. 2632.
2. Bill title: National Center for Health Statistics Reauthorization Act of 1990.
3. Bill status: As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Services on May 16, 1990.
4. Bill purpose: To amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the National Center for Health Statistics, and for other purposes.
5. Estimated cost to the Federal Government:

[By fiscal years, in millions of dollars]

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Estimated authorization levels.....	58	60	63	65	68
Estimated outlays.....	35	52	59	64	67

The costs of this bill fall within budget function 550.

Basis of Estimate

S. 2632 would reauthorize the National Center for Health Statistics for fiscal years 1991 through 1995. The bill specified the 1991 authorization level. CBO estimated the 1992 to 1995 authorization levels by increasing the 1991 authorization by projected inflation. CBO assumes that all authorizations are fully appropriated at the beginning of each fiscal year. Outlays are estimated using spendout rates computed by CBO on the basis of recent program data.

6. Estimated cost to State and local government: None.

7. Estimate comparison: None.

8. Previous CBO estimate: None.

9. Estimate prepared by: Karen Graham.

10. Estimate approved by: C.G. Nuckols for James L. Blum, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

VII. REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Committee has determined that there will be minimal or no increase in regulatory burden imposed by the bill.

VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 of the bill provides that the act may be cited as the "National Center for Health Statistics Reauthorization Act of 1990."

Section 2 of the bill amends section 306 of the Public Health Service Act. A technical correction is made in subsection (c), changing "Committee on Human Resources" to "Committee on Labor and Human Resources". A new paragraph is added to the end of subsection (h), requiring the continued annual collection of data regarding the general health, illness, and disability status of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Subsection (m) is amended to authorize \$58 million in fiscal year 1991 and such sums as may be necessary through fiscal year 1995.

IX. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with rule XXVI paragraph 12 of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following provides a print of the statute or the part or section thereof to be amended or replaced (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in *italic*, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ACT

* * * * *

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

SEC. 306. (a) * * *

* * * * *

(c) The Center shall furnish such special statistics and epidemiological compilations and surveys as the [Committee on Human Resources] *Committee on Labor and Human Resources* and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives may request. Such statistical and epidemiological compilations and surveys shall not be made subject to the payment of the actual or estimated cost of the preparation of such compilations and surveys.

* * * * *

(h) (1) There shall be an annual collection of data from the records of births, deaths, marriages, and divorces in registration areas. The data shall be obtained only from and restricted to such records of the States and municipalities which the Secretary, in his discretion, determines possess records affording satisfactory data in necessary detail and form. Each State or registration area shall be paid by the Secretary the Federal share of its reasonable costs (as determined by the Secretary) for collecting and transcribing (at the request of the Secretary and by whatever method authorized by him) its records for such data.

(2) *There shall be an annual collection of data from a statistically valid sample concerning the general health, illness, and disability status of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Specific topics to be addressed under this paragraph on an annual or rotating basis, shall include the incidence of illness and accidental injuries, prevalence of chronic diseases and impairments, disability, physician visits, hospitalizations, and the relationship between demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and health characteristics.*

* * * * *

(m) For health statistical and epidemiological activities undertaken or supported under this section, there are authorized to be appropriated [\$55,000,000 for fiscal year 1988 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1989 and 1990.] \$58,000,000 for fiscal year 1991, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1992 through 1995.

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